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# La Bella Figura: The role of a cultural philosophy on Italian consumerism

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# La Bella Figura: The role of a cultural philosophy on Italian consumerism

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## Purpose

The current study sought to understand how women living in Italy conceptualize *La Bella Figura* and how it affects their day-to-day lives, attitudes, and consumption behaviors.

## Methods

- Semi-structured interviews with 30 women (ages 18 to 50 years) living in or near Florence, Italy
- Data were collected between May - June 2018
- Grounded theory approach to data analysis
- Coding process structured by Consumer Culture Theory concept framework
- Constant comparison to identify emergent themes

## Results

Consumer Identity	Appearance	Confidence
	<p>"I think there's this expectation [in Italy] that <b>you should always be looking your absolute best.</b>"</p> <p>"Italians have been so known for their style for so long that... they also associate that with...embodying La Bella Figura."</p>	<p>"It's... <b>hard for people who are really timid and insecure</b> with themselves to come across as [La] Bella Figura."</p> <p>"If the inner [confidence] is already there, you just need a few details and <b>you're La Bella Figura anyway.</b>"</p>
Lifestyle Goals	Health	Consumerism
	<p>"I think [La Bella Figura] is part of our culture somehow, like <b>to have a general healthy image.</b>"</p> <p>"You can walk everywhere, so you get a lot of exercise. There's a lot of hills to climb, so in general <b>[the Italian lifestyle] offers a possibility for health and wellness.</b>"</p>	<p>"I think for a lot of people, and I kind of see this in my colleagues, <b>there is this drive to go shopping all the time.</b>"</p> <p>"If you want <b>to maintain yourself, you have to spend money</b>, because you have to buy cream, clothes, and makeup. So, it's expensive."</p>
Social Norms	Perceptions of Others	Media
	<p>"[La Bella Figura] is the projection that you put out to the public and the input that you receive. <b>It's sort of the feedback you get from other people and their perceptions of you.</b>"</p> <p>"There is not [one] person that is completely free. If you live in a society, then <b>you have some pressure on [what] society expects you to do [and how you] behave.</b>"</p>	<p>"<b>Especially with the internet, with social media, you see these people on Instagram, you feel ugly...</b> I think that could be a problem. It doesn't make you feel [good]."</p> <p>"If you're <b>not perfect [or] if you don't agree [with what] ...society and media impose, that is fine.</b> As long as you are happy with your body."</p>

## Discussion

- Emphasize appearance ideals in product/service offerings
- Instilling confidence via product/service offerings
- Strategic links to health and wellness in culturally-relevant product/service marketing
- 'Making a positive impression' as a culturally-defined marketing strategy
- Reframe media strategy to centralize 'real' consumers

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